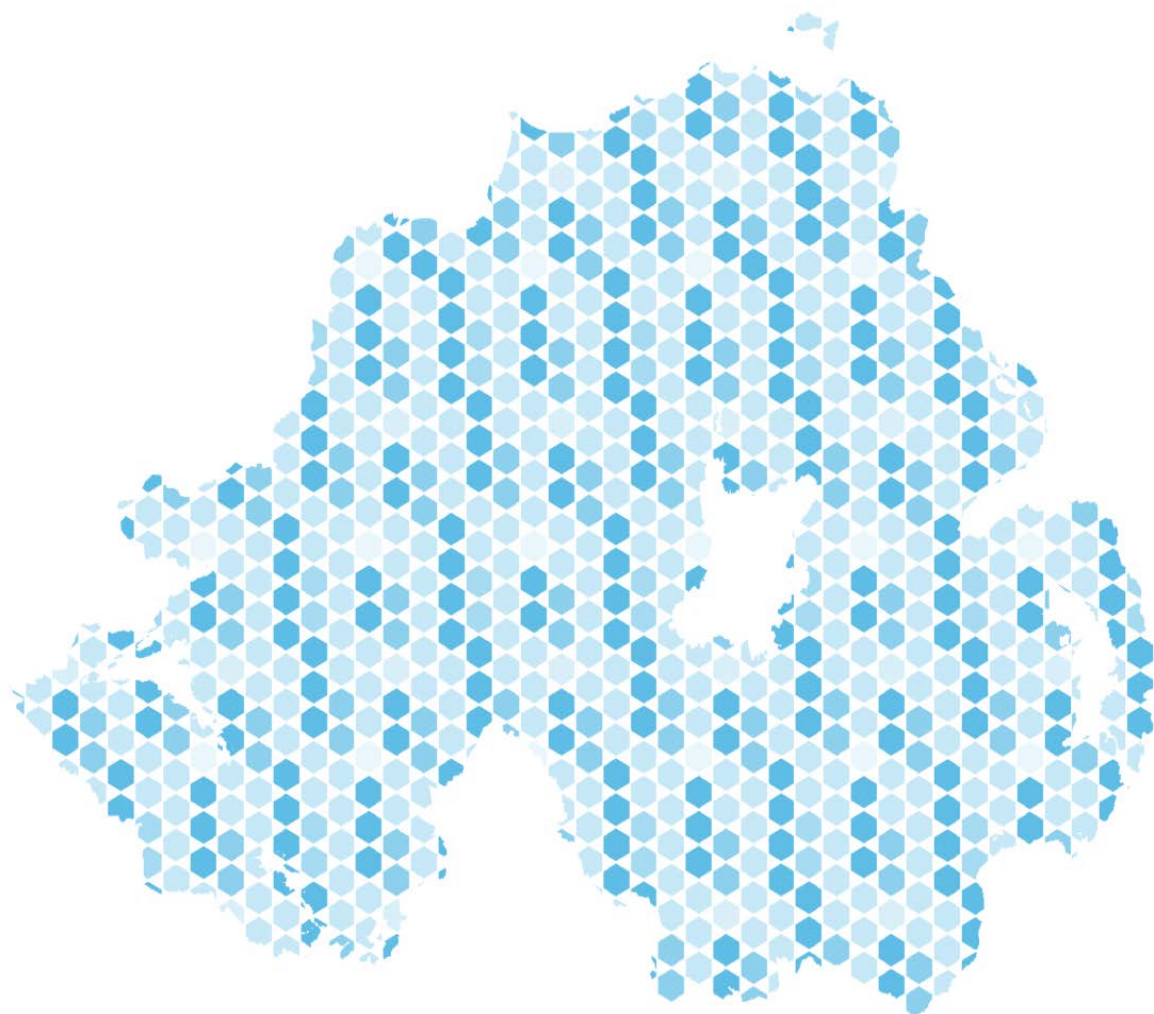


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Cairncastle Primary School,
Ballygally, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
October 2014

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
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Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation and the children's written work and held formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the very friendly environment and their appreciation of the work of the teachers in meeting the needs of individual children. The very small number of issues raised was discussed with the principal and governors. Almost all of the teachers and all of the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive. In discussions with the chair of governors, he emphasised the happy, positive ethos of the school and the focus on supporting the school's improvement journey.

2. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision for numeracy in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Cairncastle Primary School is situated in the village of Ballygally, County Antrim. Most of the children attending the school come from the village, surrounding rural area and further afield. The enrolment has remained steady over the last four years and currently stands at 126 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 11% of the children were entitled to free school meals and around 16% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Since the last inspection, a new principal has been appointed, taking up her post in September 2013.

Cairncastle Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	123	132	125	126
% Attendance	97	97	96	98
FSME Percentage ¹	15	10	13	11
% of children on SEN register	16	10	14	16
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children respond positively and with great enthusiasm to the learning opportunities organised by their teachers. They apply their learning in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum in a variety of meaningful contexts. Increasingly, as they move through the school, the children reflect in a mature manner upon their learning and suggest ways in which they can improve the quality of their work. The children's behaviour is excellent; they are confident and respond well to the positive ethos in all of the classrooms.
- The school's internal performance data indicates that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- In mathematics, across all the key stages, the children show a high level of enjoyment and engagement in their mathematical activities and are developing a very positive attitude to this core curriculum area. The younger children use confidently a range of practical resources and suitable play-based activities to develop a good understanding of mathematics including, for example, number, shape and patterns. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the most able children demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of key concepts across the mathematics curriculum. They complete calculations with good levels of speed and accuracy and show flexibility in applying a good range of mental mathematics strategies to solve problems in mental computation.
- The children identified with additional learning are making good progress in meeting the targets outlined in their individual education plans.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

- The children use very confidently a wide range of digital media to research information for their topic work. By the end of KS 2, the children have developed a good range of information and communication skills (ICT), which prepare them well for the next stage of their learning.

6. Provision

- In the most effective teaching observed, there was appropriate challenge, support and progression in the children's learning. The teachers employed very effective questioning and made skilful use of the children's responses to develop the children's thinking skills and encourage extended answers. Importantly, the teachers recap key points and reinforce the children's learning. In the less effective practice there was, at times, an over-emphasis on adult direction of the activities which minimised the opportunities for the children to make choices, self-manage and contribute more fully their own ideas.
- The teachers' individual planning includes very detailed evaluations of the children's progress which is focused well on the extent of the learning. The teachers need to build further on this good practice and use this information to inform future planning and ensure progress in the children's learning across the ability range.
- The needs of children experiencing difficulties with aspects of their learning are identified early and the children are integrated very well in to the life of the school. The special educational needs co-ordinator is committed to ongoing professional development and leads the staff well in developing further their skills in support of the children with additional learning needs. The monitoring, evaluating and systematic tracking of the children's progress has been identified as a priority for future development. The inspection endorses this important work.
- In numeracy, the children access a wide range of well-planned activities across the curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on problem-solving and investigation. The younger children's mathematical knowledge and understanding are embedded effectively through suitable play activities and as the children progress through the school, the numeracy tasks are set increasingly in real life contexts. Overall, the teachers make very good use of practical activities to develop the children's mathematical thinking and language and to consolidate and extend their knowledge. In the best practice, ICT is used effectively to support the children's learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. There is a caring and supportive ethos in the school with very good working relationships at all levels, built upon mutual respect. The children benefit from the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities which meet their needs, interests and abilities. They contribute to decision-making in the school, through, for example, participation in the school and 'Eco' councils. As a result the children are confident and display a sense of pride in their achievements.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal, in close collaboration with the staff, has placed an important focus on developing a reflective approach to school improvement. The processes for self-evaluation have been informed by a very good level of consultation with children, parents, and governors. There is evidence of ongoing improvements in the areas identified in most recent school development plan. The school has identified appropriately in the next cycle of school development planning that there is a need to monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategies designed to bring about improvements in the children's learning across the ability range.
- The school has extensive extra-curricular activities to benefit children and their families. The school values and encourages the positive contribution the parents make to developing further their role in their children's education. An extensive range of community links and use of the local environment enhances well the children's learning and all-round development.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of the inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. There are aspects of governance to review, namely the area for improvement recorded in the conclusion of this report, in particular to review the standards achieved by the children across the ability range.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education but the following areas need to be addressed; the relevant staff training needs to be completed on the dates identified and the updated complaints procedure needs to be shared with the parents. In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 reported that they very happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address, namely:

- monitor and evaluate the consistent and effective use of data, including teacher evaluations, to inform the teaching and learning and raise further the standards across the ability range.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the area for improvement.

Health and safety

1. There is a need to risk assess the arrangements for access to the school grounds.

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